



أملية خاصة بالاختبارات التي يجريها المعهد العالي للغات في جامعة حمص
من أجل القيد في درجتي الماجستير والدكتوراه — بالإضافة إلى الاختبارات
الأخرى — وهي توجيهية ولا تغني عن المصادر والمراجع ذات الصلة

A HANDY GRAMMAR REVIEW

These are English grammar and reading issues that you should learn and remember in order to do well in any future English proficiency test.

- Articles (definite & indefinite)
- Prepositions (time, place, etc.)
- Subject-verb agreement
- Verb Tenses (past, present, future, continuous, perfect)
- Infinitives and gerunds
- Modals (may, must, have to, etc.)
- Had better & would rather
- Nouns (countable & uncountable)
- Pronouns (relatives & reflexives)
- Adjectives (comparative & superlative)
- Adverbs (frequency and manner)
- Quantifiers (little, few, much, many, etc.)
- Conditionals (three types of conditional clauses)
- Passive voice
- Wishes (wish, only if, etc.)
- Conjunctions / connectors (coordinators, subordinators, correlatives & conjunctive adverbs)
- Capitalisation and punctuation.

This was prepared for the purpose of helping students and guiding them to improve their grammar skills via revising some major issues in English grammar. It is hoped that this brief review will enable students to do well on English proficiency tests carried out by the Higher Institute of Languages as it explores various grammatical issues and provides lots of examples and exercises.

BEST WISHES

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ARTICLES

INDEFINITE ARTICLES: A AND AN

"A" and "an" signal that the noun modified is indefinite, referring to *any* member of a group. For example:

- "My daughter really wants **a** dog for Christmas." This refers to *any* dog. We don't know which dog because we haven't found the dog yet.
- "Somebody call **a** policeman!" This refers to *any* policeman. We don't need a specific policeman; we need any policeman who is available.
- "When I was at the zoo, I saw **an** elephant!" Here, we're talking about a single, non-specific thing, in this case an elephant. There are probably several elephants at the zoo, but there's only *one* we're talking about here.

REMEMBER, USING **A** OR **AN** DEPENDS ON THE SOUND THAT BEGINS THE NEXT WORD.

a + singular noun beginning with a consonant: **a** boy; **a** car; **a** bike; **a** zoo; **a** dog

an + singular noun beginning with a

vowel: **an** elephant; **an** egg; **an** apple; **an** idiot; **an** orphan

a + singular noun beginning with a consonant sound: **a** user (sounds like 'yoo-zer,' i.e. begins with a consonant 'y' sound, so 'a' is used); **a** university; **a** unicycle

- **an** + nouns starting with silent "h": **an** hour
- **a** + nouns starting with a pronounced "h": **a** horse

In some cases where "h" is pronounced, such as "historical," you can use **an**.

However, **a** is more commonly used and preferred.

- A historical event is worth recording.

Another case where this rule applies is when acronyms or initialisms start with consonant letters but have vowel sounds:

An MSDS (material safety data sheet) was used to record the data.

An SPCC plan (Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures plan) will help us prepare for the worst.

If the noun is modified by an adjective, the choice between **a** and **an** depends on the initial sound of the adjective that immediately follows the article:

- **a** broken egg
- **an** unusual problem
- **a** European country (sounds like 'yer-o-pi-an,' i.e. begins with consonant 'y' sound)

Remember, too, that in English, the indefinite articles are used to indicate membership in a group:

- I am **a** teacher. (I am a member of a large group known as teachers.)
- Brian is **an** Irishman. (Brian is a member of the people known as Irish.)
- Seiko is **a** practicing Buddhist. (Seiko is a member of the group of people known as Buddhists.)

DEFINITE ARTICLE: **THE**

The definite article is used before singular and plural nouns when the noun is specific or particular. **The** signals that the noun is definite, that it refers to a particular member of a group. For example:

"**The** dog that bit me ran away." Here, we're talking about a *specific* dog, the dog that bit me.

"I was happy to see **the** policeman who saved my cat!" Here, we're talking about a *particular* policeman. Even if we don't know the policeman's name, it's still a particular policeman because it is the one who saved the cat.

"I saw **the** elephant at the zoo." Here, we're talking about a *specific* noun. Probably there is only one elephant at the zoo.

COUNT AND NONCOUNT NOUNS

The can be used with non-count nouns, or the article can be omitted entirely.

- "I love to sail over **the** water" (some specific body of water) or "I love to sail over water" (any water).
- "He spilled **the** milk all over the floor" (some specific milk, perhaps the milk you bought earlier that day) or "He spilled milk all over the floor" (any milk).

"A/an" can be used only with count nouns.

- "I need **a** bottle of water."
- "I need **a** new glass of milk."

Most of the time, you can't say, "She wants a water," unless you're implying, say, a bottle of water.

GEOGRAPHICAL USE OF THE

There are some specific rules for using **the** with geographical nouns.

Do not use **the** before:

- names of most countries/territories: *Italy, Mexico, Bolivia*; however, *the Netherlands, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, the United States*
- names of cities, towns, or states: *Seoul, Manitoba, Miami*
- names of streets: *Washington Blvd., Main St.*
- names of lakes and bays: *Lake Titicaca, Lake Erie* except with a group of lakes like *the Great Lakes*
- names of mountains: *Mount Everest, Mount Fuji* except with ranges of mountains like **the Andes** or **the Rockies** or unusual names like **the Matterhorn**
- names of continents (Asia, Europe)
- names of islands (Easter Island, Maui, Key West) except with island chains like **the Aleutians, the Hebrides, or the Canary Islands**

Do use **the** before:

- names of rivers, oceans and seas: **the Nile, the Pacific**
- points on the globe: **the Equator, the North Pole**
- geographical areas: **the Middle East, the West**
- deserts, forests, gulfs, and peninsulas: **the Sahara, the Persian Gulf, the Black Forest, the Iberian Peninsula**

OMISSION OF ARTICLES

Some common types of nouns that don't take an article are:

- Names of languages and nationalities: *Chinese, English, Spanish, Russian* (unless you are referring to the population of the nation: "**The** Spanish are known for their warm hospitality.")
- Names of sports: *volleyball, hockey, baseball*
- Names of academic subjects: *mathematics, biology, history, computer science*

PREPOSITIONS

A preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, time, place, location, spatial relationships, or to introduce an object. Some examples of prepositions are words like "in," "at," "on," "of," and "to."

Prepositions of Time

To refer to one point in time, use the prepositions "in," "at," and "on."

Use "in" with parts of the day (not specific times), months, years, and seasons.

- He reads **in** the evening.
- The weather is cold **in** December.
- She was born **in** 1996.
- We rake leaves **in** the fall.

Use "at" with the time of day. Also use "at" with noon, night, and midnight.

- I go to work **at** 8:00.
- He eats lunch **at** noon.
- She often goes for a walk **at** night.
- They go to bed **at** midnight.

Use "on" with days of the week.

- I work **on** Saturdays.
- He does laundry **on** Wednesdays.

To refer to extended time, use the prepositions "since," "for," "by," "during," "from...to," "from...until," "with," and "within."

- I have lived in Minneapolis **since** 2005. (I moved there in 2005 and still live there.)
- He will be in Toronto **for** 3 weeks. (He will spend 3 weeks in Toronto.)
- She will finish her homework **by** 6:00. (She will finish her homework sometime between now and 6:00.)
- He works part time **during** the summer. (For the period of time throughout the summer.)
- I will collect data **from** January **to** June. (Starting in January and ending in June.)
- They are in school **from** August **until** May. (Starting in August and ending in May.)
- She will graduate **within** 2 years. (Not longer than 2 years.)

Prepositions of Place

To refer to a place, use the prepositions "in" (the point itself), "at" (the general vicinity), "on" (the surface), and "inside" (something contained).

- They will meet **in** the lunchroom.
- She was waiting **at** the corner.
- He left his phone **on** the bed.
- Place the pen **inside** the drawer.

To refer to an object higher than a point, use the prepositions "over" and "above."

To refer to an object lower than a point, use the prepositions "below," "beneath," "under," and "underneath."

- The bird flew **over** the house.
- The plates were on the shelf **above** the cups.
- Basements are dug **below** ground.
- There is hard wood **beneath** the carpet.
- The squirrel hid the nuts **under** a pile of leaves.
- The cat is hiding **underneath** the box.

To refer to an object close to a point, use the prepositions "by," "near," "next to," "between," "among," and "opposite."

- The gas station is **by** the grocery store.
- The park is **near** her house.
- Park your bike **next to** the garage.
- There is a deer **between** the two trees.
- There is a purple flower **among** the weeds.
- The garage is **opposite** the house.

Prepositions of Location

To refer to a location, use the prepositions "in" (an area or volume), "at" (a point), and "on" (a surface).

- They live **in** the country. (an area)
- She will find him **at** the library. (a point)
- There is a lot of dirt **on** the window. (a surface)

Prepositions of Spatial Relationships

To refer to a spatial relationship, use the prepositions "above," "across," "against," "ahead of," "along," "among," "around," "behind," "below," "beneath," "beside," "between," "from," "in front of," "inside," "near," "off," "out of," "through," "toward," "under," and "within."

- The post office is **across** the street from the grocery store.
- We will stop at many attractions **along** the way.
- The kids are hiding **behind** the tree.
- His shirt is **off**.
- Walk **toward** the garage and then turn left.
- Place a check mark **within** the box.

Prepositions of Direction

To refer to a direction, use the prepositions "to," "in," "into," "on," and "onto."

- She drove **to** the store.
- Don't ring the doorbell. Come right **in(to)** the house.
- Drive **on(to)** the grass and park the car there.

Some Common Verb + Preposition Combinations

About: worry, complain, read

- He **worries about** the future.
- She **complained about** the homework.
- I **read about** the flooding in the city.

At: arrive (a building or event), smile, look

- He **arrived at** the airport 2 hours early.
- The children **smiled at** her.
- She **looked at** him.

From: differ, suffer

- The results **differ from** my original idea.
- She **suffers from** dementia.

For: account, allow, search

- Be sure to **account for** any discrepancies.

- I returned the transcripts to the interviewees to **allow for** revisions to be made.
- They are **searching for** the missing dog.

In: occur, result, succeed

- The same problem **occurred in** three out of four cases.
- My recruitment strategies **resulted in** finding 10 participants.
- She will **succeed in** completing her degree.

Of: approve, consist, smell

- I **approve of** the idea.
- The recipe **consists of** three basic ingredients.
- The basement **smells of** mildew.

On: concentrate, depend, insist

- He is **concentrating on** his work.
- They **depend on** each other.
- I must **insist on** following this rule.

To: belong, contribute, lead, refer

- Bears **belong to** the family of mammals.
- I hope to **contribute to** the previous research.
- My results will **lead to** future research on the topic.
- Please **refer to** my previous explanation.

With: (dis)agree, argue, deal

- I **(dis)agree with** you.
- She **argued with** him.
- They will **deal with** the situation.

SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT

A singular subject takes a singular verb. A plural subject takes a plural verb.

1. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular too.

- **She** **writes** every day.

Exception: When using the singular "they," use plural verb forms.

2. If the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural.

- **They** **write** every day.

Sometimes, however, it seems a bit more complicated than this.

3. When the subject of the sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, use a plural verb.

- **The doctoral student and the committee members** **write** every day.

- **The percentage of employees who called in sick and the number of employees who left their jobs within 2 years** **are** reflective of the level of job satisfaction.

4. When there is one subject and more than one verb, the verbs throughout the sentence must agree with the subject.

- **Interviews** **are** one way to collect data and **allow** researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of participants.
- **An assumption** **is** something that is generally accepted as true and **is** an important consideration when conducting a doctoral study.

5. When a phrase comes between the subject and the verb, remember that the verb still agrees with the subject, not the noun or pronoun in the phrase following the subject of the sentence.

- **The student**, as well as the committee members, **is** excited.
- **The student** with all the master's degrees **is** very motivated.
- **Strategies** that the teacher uses to encourage classroom participation **include** using small groups and clarifying expectations.
- **The focus** of the interviews **was** nine purposively selected participants.

6. When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by "or" or "nor," use a singular verb.
 - **The chairperson or the CEO** **approves** the proposal before proceeding.
7. When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by "or" or "nor," the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is closest to the verb. This is also called the rule of proximity.
 - **The student or the committee members** **write** every day.
 - **The committee members or the student** **writes** every day.
8. The words and phrases "each," "each one," "either," "neither," "everyone," "everybody," "anyone," "anybody," "nobody," "somebody," "someone," and "no one" are singular and require a singular verb.
 - **Each** of the participants **was** willing to be recorded.
 - **Neither** alternative hypothesis **was** accepted.
 - I will offer a \$5 gift card to **everybody** who **participates** in the study.
 - **No one** **was** available to meet with me at the preferred times.
9. Noncount nouns take a singular verb.
 - **Education** **is** the key to success.
 - **Diabetes** **affects** many people around the world.
 - **The information** obtained from the business owners **was** relevant to include in the study.
 - **The research** I found on the topic **was** limited.
10. Some countable nouns in English such as *earnings*, *goods*, *odds*, *surroundings*, *proceeds*, *contents*, and *valuables* only have a plural form and take a plural verb.
 - **The earnings** for this quarter **exceed** expectations.
 - **The proceeds** from the sale **go** to support the homeless population in the city.
 - **Locally produced goods** **have** the advantage of shorter supply chains.
11. In sentences beginning with "there is" or "there are," the subject follows the verb. Since "there" is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows the verb.

- There **is** little **administrative support**.

There **are** many **factors** affecting teacher retention.

12. Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but are considered singular and take a singular verb. Some examples are "group," "team," "committee," "family," and "class."

- **The group** **meets** every week.

- **The committee** **agrees** on the quality of the writing.

However, the plural verb is used if the focus is on the individuals in the group. This is much less common.

- **The committee** **participate** in various volunteer activities in their private lives.

VERB TENSES

Verb tenses show when an action took place, as well as how long it occurred. The main verb tenses are the past, present, and future.

There are also additional aspects that give extra details, such as the length of time the action occurred, which actions happened first, or whether a past action has an impact on the present. These grammatical aspects are the simple tense, perfect tense, continuous tense, and perfect continuous tense.

English tenses examples: verb tenses chart

	<u>Past</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Future</u>
Simple	<i>I helped my neighbor yesterday.</i>	<i>I help my neighbor every day.</i>	<i>I will help my neighbor tomorrow.</i>
Perfect	<i>I had helped my neighbor clean his attic before I fixed his car.</i>	<i>I have helped my neighbor too much this week.</i>	<i>I will have helped my neighbor a hundred times by the end of the month.</i>
Continuous	<i>I was helping my neighbor when he <u>brought</u> me iced tea.</i>	<i>I am helping my neighbor while he fixes up his house.</i>	<i>I will be helping my neighbor next month when he moves.</i>
Perfect continuous	<i>I had been helping my neighbor for a year before he finally thanked me.</i>	<i>I have been helping my neighbor since I moved in.</i>	<i>I will have been helping my neighbor for a year next month.</i>

Past tenses

Simple past

We use the simple past to show actions completed in the past, with no extra emphasis.

For regular verbs, you form the simple past tense by adding the suffix *-ed* to the end of the verb (or just *-d* if the past tense verb already ends in an *e*).

Be careful of irregular past tense verbs, however. These don't follow the normal rules and use their own unique forms for the past tense. For example, the past tense of the irregular verb *go* is *went*.

Regular verbs: *I **picked** up the glass, but it **dropped** from my hand.*

Irregular verbs: *This morning I **went** to the store, but I **forgot** the milk.*

Past perfect

[*had*] + [past participle]

What if you're talking about two different actions in the past and want to show that one happened before the other? The past perfect, also known as the pluperfect, shows that one past action happened earlier than another one.

*She **had arrived** at the office before she realized it was Sunday.*

*I ran to my car when I noticed my wife **had left** already.*

Past continuous

[*was/were*] + [present participle]

Use the past continuous to show an ongoing action in the past, especially if the action was interrupted by another action. It's also used for habitual actions that occurred in the past but not in the present. It's usually used with adverbs like *always* or adverb phrases like *all the time*.

*My dog **was whimpering in his sleep** when the TV woke him up.*

*As kids, my friends and I **were always getting** into trouble.*

Past perfect continuous

[*had*] + [*been*] + [present participle]

The past perfect continuous tense is used just like the past perfect tense, except it describes ongoing actions that happened in the past instead of a one-time occurrence. It's often used with the words *when*, *until*, and *before* to connect it to another past action.

*Before he got his first job as a writer, he **had been working** as a proofreader.*

*I **had been living** on my friend's couch for a year until they kicked me out.*

Present tenses

Simple present

The simple present is the most basic of the English tenses. It's used for individual actions or habitual actions in the present.

Often the simple present is just the root verb with no changes or additions. The main exception to this is when the subject is third person and singular. In this case you add the suffix *-s*. If the verb ends in *o*, *ch*, *sh*, *th*, *ss*, *gh*, or *z*, you add *-es*. If the verb ends in a consonant and *y* (and the subject is third-person singular), drop the *y* and add *-ies*.

*Today I **feel** like a million bucks!*

*My brother **carries** the groceries while my sister **stays** on the couch.*

Present perfect

[*have/has*] + [past participle]

Although it's quite common, the present perfect is one of the most difficult English verb tenses. It is used to describe a few different types of actions, including:

- an ongoing action started in the past that is not yet completed
- the same action completed multiple times in the past and likely to be completed again
- an action completed very recently (usually with *just* or *now*)
- an uncompleted action that is expected to be finished (in the negative)

Additionally, the present perfect can be used to emphasize the significance of a completed action, especially one that happened over time.

*We **have tricked** him every April Fool's Day since we were kids.*

*My niece **has grown** so much this year!*

Present continuous

[*am/is/are*] + [present participle]

Use the present continuous to show an action happening right now or in the near future.

I am reading** The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy **for the fifth time!

***We are eating** pizza tonight.*

Present perfect continuous

[have/has] + [been] + [present participle]

The present perfect continuous shows an ongoing action in the present that was started in the past. It is often used to emphasize the length of time.

***We have been waiting** for over an hour!*

***The team has been practicing** nonstop for the tournament.*

Future tenses

Simple future

Use the simple future for actions that have not happened yet but will later. To form the simple future, just place the modal verb *will* before the root form of the main verb. (Note that if the action will happen in the **near future**, you can use the present continuous instead.)

***She will be** president one day.*

***I will not go** to the wedding without a date!*

Future perfect

[will] + [have] + [past participle]

The future perfect shows an action that will be completed in the future by a specified time. Because it depends on another time, the future perfect is often used with words like *by*, *before*, *at*, or *when*.

***By the time you read this, I will have** already **left**.*

*She **will have eaten** lunch before her sister even wakes up.*

Future continuous

[will] + [be] + [present participle]

Use the future continuous tense for future actions happening over a period of time, especially when a specific time is mentioned. The future continuous tense also shows more certainty and likelihood than the simple future.

*By this time tomorrow, I **will be drinking** margaritas on the beach.*

*We **will be attending** a meeting from noon until 3 p.m.*

Future perfect continuous

[will] + [have] + [been] + [present participle]

The future perfect continuous depicts future ongoing actions that continue up until a certain point. Like the future perfect and future continuous, it's used with a specified time.

*In ten minutes, my parents **will have been waiting** in traffic for four hours.*

*I **will have been eating** healthy for a whole year by September.*

INFINITIVES & GERUNDS

Fill in the correct form: Gerund or Infinitive (with or without "TO")

1. It's impossible to play on this pitch because the ball won't bounce. (PLAY)
2. They accused his youngest son of breaking the fence. (BREAK)
3. I blamed him for not helping me with my homework. That's why I got a bad mark. (NOT HELP)
4. I would like to know why he insisted on doing this alone (DO).
5. I suggest going for a walk this afternoon. How about it? (GO)
6. The doctor advised him not to go swimming because of his cold. (NOT GO)
7. I managed to balance my account without taking out a new loan. (TAKE)
8. I can't afford to spend money on new clothes. (SPEND)
9. She can't tolerate not being the centre of attention. (NOT BE)
10. I regret to say that the event must be cancelled due to the circumstances. (SAY)
11. Dad demanded to know what I was doing up at this time of the night. (KNOW)
12. For some people it's difficult to get used to waking up early in the morning. (WAKE)
13. Why did you avoid telling your father the truth? (TELL)
14. Do you fancy going out with me tonight? (GO)
15. In the old days you were allowed to smoke almost everywhere. (SMOKE)
16. My teacher forbade us to leave school during lessons. (LEAVE)
17. I forgot to stop at the store for some groceries. (STOP)
18. This car needs washing. Could you do for me? (WASH)
19. We postponed going to the cinema until next week. (GO)
20. I didn't expect her to win the award. (WIN)
21. He spends all his spare time collecting stamps and coins. (COLLECT)
22. When I was in London, I managed to see almost all the important sights, despite the little time I had. (SEE)
23. He denied having contact with the suspect. (HAVE)
24. I remember going to my first concert when I was 18. (GO)
25. We were anxious to go abroad for the first time. (GO)

This worksheet concentrates on those verbs that can take both the infinitive or the gerund but with a change in meaning. e.g *stop, remember, regret, try*, etc, etc. Fill each space with either the gerund or the infinitive form of the verb that is given in brackets after each gap.

1. We had worked hard all morning, so at midday we stopped ____ (have) a coffee and a sandwich.
2. Did you remember ____ (buy) that bag of apples I asked you to get. We need those apples for the cake this evening.

3. If you are getting so many headaches, you should try ____ (see) a specialist at the hospital. It could be something serious.
4. We regret ____ (inform) you that you have failed the first part of the test. You can go home now if you wish.
5. If you go on ____ (listen) to music that loud, you'll be deaf before you're twenty!
6. You should stop ____ (go) to that biker club. It's taking up too much of your time.
7. It's strange that I remember ____ (go) to school the first time when I was five but I don't remember when we moved house a year later.
8. I tried ____ (stop) the thieves but they were both on motorbikes and it was useless running after them.
9. You must regret ____ (tell) your sister about her husband now. She has never been the same since.
10. I meant ____ (phone) you last night but I completely forgot. So sorry!
11. After graduating in law from Cambridge, she went on ____ (become) a famous lawyer.
12. I want to work abroad but not if it means ____ (have to learn) another language. I am terrible at learning languages!

Gerunds and **infinitives** can replace a *noun* in a sentence.

Gerund = the present participle (-ing) form of the verb, e.g., singing, dancing, running.

Infinitive = to + the base form of the verb, e.g., to sing, to dance, to run.

Whether you use a **gerund** or an **infinitive** depends on the **main verb** in the sentence.

I expect *to have* the results of the operation soon. (Infinitive)

I anticipate *having* the research completed eventually. (Gerund)

Gerunds can be used after certain verbs including enjoy, fancy, discuss, dislike, finish, mind, suggest, recommend, keep, and avoid.

1. After *prepositions* of place and time.
I made dinner *before getting* home.
He looked unhappy *after seeing* his work schedule.
2. To replace the *subject or object* of a sentence
Lachlan likes *eating* coconut oil.
Jumping off a cliff is dangerous, but a real thrill.

Infinitives can be used after certain verbs including agree, ask, decide, help, plan, hope, learn, want, would like, and promise.

1. After many *adjectives*:
It is hard *to make* dinner this late.
I find it difficult *to describe* my feelings about writing research essays.
2. To show *purpose*:
I left for Russia *to study* Russian.
I came to the office *to solve* the mystery of the missing keys.

MODAL VERBS

A modal is a type of **auxiliary (helping) verb** that is used to express: ability, possibility, permission or obligation. Modal phrases (or semi-modals) are used to express the same things as modals, but are a combination of auxiliary verbs and the preposition to. The modals and semi-modals in English are:

1. Can/could/be able to
2. May/might
3. Shall/should
4. Must/have to
5. Will/would

Can, Could, Be Able To

Can, could and be able to are used to express a variety of ideas in English:

Ability/Lack of Ability

Present and Future:

can/can't + base form of the verb

1. Tom **can write** poetry very well.
2. I **can help** you with that next week.
3. Lisa **can't** speak French.

am / is / are / will be + able to + base form of the verb
am not / isn't / aren't / won't be + able to + base form of the verb

1. Mike **is able to solve** complicated math equations
2. The support team **will be able to help** you in about ten minutes.
3. I **won't be able to visit** you next summer.

Past:

could / couldn't + base form of the verb

1. When I was a child I **could climb** trees.
was / were + able to + base form of the verb
wasn't / weren't + able to + base form of the verb
hasn't / haven't + been able to + base form of the verb
1. I **wasn't able to visit** her in the hospital.
2. He **hasn't been able to get** in touch with the client yet.

Note: Can and could do not take an infinitive (to verb) and do not take the future auxiliary will.

- Incorrect: I can to help you this afternoon.
- Correct: I **can help** you this afternoon.
- Correct: I **will (I'll) be able to help** you this afternoon.

Possibility / Impossibility

can / can't + base form of the verb

1. You can catch that train at 10:43.
2. He can't see you right now. He's in surgery.

could + base form of the verb

1. I **could fly** via Amsterdam if I leave the day before.

Ask Permission / Give Permission

Can + Subject + base form of the verb (informal)

1. **Can** you **lend** me ten dollars?

Can + base form of the verb (informal)

1. You **can borrow** my car.

Could + subject + base form of the verb (polite)

1. **Could** I **have** your number?

2. **Could** I **talk** to your supervisor please?

Make a suggestion - To make a suggestion use:

Could + base form of the verb (informal)

1. You **could take** the tour of the castle tomorrow.

Exercises: Can, Could, Be able to

Fill in the correct form of can, could or be able to as in the examples.

1. Ben could not help his little brother with his homework yesterday.
2. Can I call you later tonight?
1. _____ Tony run long distances when he was a boy?
2. _____ you please call a tow truck for me? My car broke down. (polite)
3. The students _____ to buy their textbooks today. The bookstore is all out of them.
4. _____ you teach me how to fix my computer? You're so good at it.
5. _____ you _____ reach the customer if you call him at 4:00 his time?

Answers:

1. Could
2. Could
3. aren't able
4. Can
5. Will/be able to
May, Might

Formal Permission / Formal Prohibition

may / may not + base form of the verb

1. You **may start** your exam now.
2. You **may not wear** sandals to work.

Polite Request

May + subject + base form of the verb

1. **May I help** you?

Possibility / Negative Possibility

may/ might + base form of the verb

1. We **may go out** for dinner tonight. Do you want to join us?
2. Our company **might get** the order if the client agrees to the price.
may not / might not + base form of the verb

1. Adam and Sue **may not buy** that house. It's very expensive.
2. They **might not buy** a house at all.

To Make a Suggestion (when there is no better alternative)

may as well / might as well + base form of the verb

1. You **may as well come** inside. John will be home soon.
2. We **might as well take** Friday off. There's no work to be done anyway.

Polite Suggestion

might + base form of the verb

1. You **might like to try** the salmon fillet. It's our special today.

Exercises: May / Might

Fill in the correct form of may or might as in the example.

1. May I sit here?
1. They _____ finish the project on time. The main engineer is ill.
2. You _____ want to stop by the museum gift shop on your way out.
3. _____ I have your autograph?
4. He _____ visit the Louvre. He's in Paris anyway.
5. You _____ park your car here. It's reserved for guests of the hotel only.

Answers:

1. might not
2. might
3. May
4. may as well
5. may not

Shall, Should, Ought to

To Offer of Assistance or Polite Suggestion (When you are quite sure of a positive answer)

Shall + subject + base form of the verb

- **Shall** we go for a walk?

Note: Shall is only used with I or we. It is used instead of will only in formal English.

To Offer of Assistance or Polite Suggestion (When you are not sure of a positive answer)

Should + subject + base form of the verb

- **Should** I call a doctor?

A Prediction or Expectation that Something Will Happen

should/shouldn't + base form of the verb

- The proposal **should be finished** on time.

- I **shouldn't be** late. The train usually arrives on time.

To Give Advice

should / ought to + base form of the verb

- You **should check** that document before you send it out.
- You **ought to have** your car serviced before the winter.

To Give Advice (about something you think wrong or unacceptable)

shouldn't + base form of the verb

- James **shouldn't teach** him words like those.

Exercises: Should, Shouldn't, Ought To

Fill in should, shouldn't or ought in the following sentences as in the example.

1. He shouldn't encourage such bad behavior.
1. You _____ get your teeth cleaned at least once a year.
2. The house _____ be ready to move into by next month. It's almost finished.
3. Ron _____ to improve his attitude. If he doesn't, he might get fired.
4. _____ I get your jacket? It's cold in here.
5. You _____ put your feet on the table. It's not polite.

Answers:

1. should
2. should
3. ought
4. shall
5. shouldn't

Must, Have to, Need to, Don't have to, Needn't

Necessity or Requirement

Present and Future:

must / have to / need to + base form of the verb

1. You **must have** a passport to cross the border.
2. Elisabeth **has to apply** for her visa by March 10th.
3. I **need to drop by** his room to pick up a book.

Past:

had to / needed to + base form of the verb

1. I **had to work** late last night.
2. I **needed to drink** a few cups of coffee in order to stay awake.

Note: have to and need to are often used in the same context, but many times, need to is used to express something that is less urgent, something in which you have a choice.

Almost 100% Certain

must + base form of the verb

- Thomas has lived in Paris for years. His French **must** be very good.

To Persuade

must / have to + base form of the verb

- You **must try** this wine. It's excellent.
- You **have to** visit us while you're in town.

Prohibited or Forbidden

must not / mustn't + base form of the verb

- You **must not drive** over the speed limit.
- You **mustn't leave** medicines where children can get to them.

Lack of Necessity

don't / doesn't / didn't + have to + base form of the verb

- You **don't have to park** the car. The hotel valet will do it for you.
- Tim **doesn't have to go** to school today. It's a holiday.
- You **didn't have to shout**. Everyone could hear you.

needn't + base form of the verb

- You **needn't worry** about me. I'll be fine.

Exercises: Must, Have to, Need to, Don't Have to, Needn't

Fill in the blanks with one of these modals: must, must not, have to, has to, don't have to, doesn't have to, needn't as in the examples. There may be more than one correct answer.

1. Shira doesn't have to drive to the airport. She's going by taxi.

2. You must speak politely to the customers.
1. You _____ tell Anna about the party tomorrow night. It's a surprise! (must not, need to, doesn't have to)
2. Tina _____ register for her classes on Monday, otherwise she won't get a place in them. (doesn't have to, mustn't, has to)
3. You _____ send that fax. I've already sent it. (must, will have to, don't have to)
4. A dog _____ get special training in order to be a guide dog. (must, need to, don't have to)
5. Jeremy _____ get up early tomorrow. His class was cancelled. (mustn't, doesn't have to, don't need to)

Answers:

1. must not
2. has to
3. don't have to
4. must
5. doesn't have to

Modals: Will / Would

will / won't + base form of the verb

- John **will pick** you up at 7:00am.
- Beth **won't be** happy with the results of the exam.

Polite Request or Statement

Will / Would + base form of the verb

- **Will** you please **take** the trash out?
- **Would** you **mind** if I sat here?
- **I'd (I would) like** to sign up for your workshop.

Habitual Past Action

Would/Wouldn't + base form of the verb

- When I was a child, I **would spend** hours playing with my train set.
- Peter **wouldn't eat** broccoli when he was a kid. He loves it now.

Exercises: will, would

Fill in the blanks with one of the following words: will, won't, would, wouldn't.

1. Will you please help me lift this box?
1. I _____ like to order the onion soup please.
2. The manager _____ be pleased to hear that a customer slipped on the wet floor.
3. _____ it be okay if I slept here tonight?
4. When Igor lived in Russia, he _____ call his mother as often as he does now.
5. I can assure you sir, the order _____ be shipped out tonight.

Answers: 1. would 2. won't 3. would 4. wouldn't 5. will

Exercises – All Modals

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the following modals: can, could, be able to, may, might, shall, should, must, have to, don't have to, need to - You may have to make the modals negative according to the context of the sentence. - There may be more than one possibility.

1. He **has to** take his car to be serviced. The brakes are squeaking.
2. **Would** you please save me a seat at the dinner event.
1. If you are sick, you _____ go to work. You'll infect everyone there.
2. Drivers _____ stop at red lights.
3. You _____ finish the proposal today. You can finish it tomorrow.
4. She _____ hear much better with her new hearing aids.
5. _____ I order us a bottle of wine?
6. Sam _____ pick his daughter up from school. She's taking the bus home.
7. You _____ smoke here. It's a smoke-free building.
8. You _____ eat so many sweets. They are bad for you.
9. _____ you mind walking a little faster? We're going to be late.
10. I'm sorry. I _____ help you. I don't know how to do it.

Answers:

1. shouldn't
2. must
3. don't have to
4. can
5. shall
6. needn't
7. mustn't
8. shouldn't
9. would
10. can't

HAD BETTER & WOULD RATHER

'Had better' is used to give advice or suggest a good idea, somehow similar to 'should.' 'On the other hand, 'would rather' expresses a personal preference, like saying what you prefer.

- **would rather – meaning: (would) prefer (PREFERENCE)**

POSITIVE: *I d rather be at home doing nothing than working without getting paid.* (MEANING: (would) prefer – preference)

NEGATIVE: *I d rather not eat out tonight, if you don't mind.*

QUESTION FORM: *Would you rather watch an action film or a drama?*

- **had better – meaning: ought to / should (STRONG ADVICE, even THREAT)**

POSITIVE: *It's getting late. I d better get going.*

NEGATIVE: *You d better not forget your assignment. You'll be in trouble if you do!*

QUESTION FORM: *Had I better speak to him now, or wait until things cool down a bit?*

Simple Rules

As we can draw from the examples,

- «*Would rather*» and «*had better*» are followed by a **bare infinitive** (=without *to*).
- When we want to use the negative form, we place «*not*» right **before the bare infinitive**, NOT after «*had*».
- For questions, we simply **invert «*would*» or «*had*» and the subject**, and leave the rest the same.

Typical mistakes

Some typical mistakes include:

- Not knowing what «*d*» stands for, «*would*» or «*had*».

NOUNS

A **noun** is a word that represents a person, thing, concept, or place. Most sentences contain at least one noun or pronoun. For example, the sentences below contain anywhere from one to three nouns.

Examples: The **dog** ran very fast.

June is my favorite **month**.

Teachers emphasize the **importance** of **grammar**.

A complete sentence usually consists of at least a subject and a verb. The subject describes some person or thing, and the verb describes an action carried out by the subject.

In most cases, the subject is a noun or a pronoun. So the most basic role for a noun is to act as the subject for a verb that follows it.

Examples: Nouns as subjects:

- Birds fly.
- David went out.
- Pizza is delicious.

Nouns and pronouns can also play the role of **object** in a sentence. An object usually comes after the verb and represents something or someone that is affected by the action described. Objects can be direct or indirect:

- The **direct object** is someone or something that is directly acted upon by the verb.
- The **indirect object** is someone or something that receives the direct object.

Examples: Nouns as direct and indirect objects

- Mary lends Bente the calculator.
- Please give Jeremy some bread.
- I've brought the girls a gift!

Nouns vs. pronouns

Pronouns are a much smaller set of words (such as "I," "she," and "they") that are used in a similar way to nouns. They are primarily used to stand in for a noun that has already been mentioned or to refer to yourself and other people.

Like nouns, pronouns can function as the head of a noun phrase and as the subject or object of a verb. You can have a complete sentence consisting of just a pronoun and a verb (e.g., “He walks.”), just as you could with a noun (“Jack walks.”).

Unlike nouns, some pronouns (mainly the personal pronouns) change their forms depending on the grammatical context they’re used in. For example, the first-person pronoun is “I” when it’s used as a subject and “me” when it’s used as an object, whereas a noun like “dog” would look the same in both cases.

Examples: Pronouns in a sentence:

I can’t attend on Friday.

Have **you** ever met **them** before?

That is beside the point.

According to **her**, **it** might rain tomorrow.

Common vs. proper nouns

An important distinction is made between two types of nouns, common nouns and proper nouns.

- **Common nouns** are more general. A common noun refers to a class of person, place, thing, or concept, but not to someone or something specific.
- **Proper nouns** are the names of specific people, places, things, or concepts. They are always capitalized to distinguish them from common nouns.

Examples: Common and proper nouns

Anya is traveling to France by train.

Of the three children, Lola has the strongest grasp of geometry.

Note: The names of seasons (e.g., “spring”) are treated as common nouns in English and therefore not capitalized. People often assume they are proper nouns, but this is an error. The names of days and months, however, are capitalized since they’re treated as proper nouns in English (e.g., “Wednesday,” “January”).

- **Countable nouns** (also called **count nouns**) refer to things that can be counted. They can be preceded by an indefinite article or a number, and they can be pluralized. Most nouns are countable (e.g., “fact(s)” or “misnomer(s)”).

Uncountable nouns (**also called noncount nouns or mass nouns**) **refer to things that can't Countable vs. uncountable nouns**

Another important distinction is between countable and uncountable nouns:

- be counted. They should never be preceded by an indefinite article or a number, and they cannot be pluralized (e.g., “information” or “advice”).

A common mistake in English is treating uncountable nouns as if they were countable by pluralizing them or using an indefinite article. The solution to these problems is usually to rephrase using a related term or phrase that is countable.

Examples: Mistakes with the uncountable noun “research”

- * My previous two researches indicated that ... (incorrect)
- My previous two studies indicated that ... (correct)
- * It's important to account for bias in a research. (incorrect)
- It's important to account for bias in research. (correct)
- It's important to account for bias in a research project. (correct)

Collective nouns

A **collective noun** is a word used to refer to a group of people or things, such as “team,” “band,” or “herd.” A collective noun can also be a proper noun—for example, the name of a specific company or band.

A collective noun may appear to be singular (e.g., “team”) or plural (e.g., “The Beatles”) in form, and there's some disagreement about whether they should be treated grammatically as singular or plural. The following applies for US vs. UK English.

- In **US English**, it's standard to treat collective nouns as singular, regardless of whether they look plural or not.
- In **UK English**, the same words may be treated as plural or singular depending on the context—for example, treated as plural when you're emphasizing the individual members of the group, singular when you're emphasizing the overall collective.

Examples: Collective nouns (US English)The whole **team** is really excited to meet you!

A **gaggle** of geese is the most threatening thing you're likely to encounter at the park.

My favorite band is **Fleetwood Mac**, but **Talking Heads** is pretty good, too.

PRONOUNS

Pronouns have several sub categories but the most widely used among them are the ones that will be dealt with in this tutorial. Interrogative Pronouns ask questions, Relative Pronouns reveal the relation, Reflexive Pronouns self-reflect and Possessive Pronouns reveal who possesses.

Relative Pronouns

Relative Pronoun shows the relation of a noun with its adjective. It supervises the adjective that follows it. Words like who, whose, which, that, whom are all Relative Pronouns. Let us now look at how they are used in a sentence to make it easier for you to identify it when you see one –

- The boy who studied at Hogwards is back.
- Her sister whose beautiful clothes she borrows is back from Paris.
- My Red Fur coat, which I sold yesterday, found its way back to me today.
- The girl that you slapped stole your cap.
- The receptionist whom I appointed on contract is very hard working.

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns have the suffix ‘self’ or ‘selves’ in them.

Reflexive pronouns are pronouns which act upon the object which is the subject itself. Yourself, Myself, Herself, Himself, Itself, Ourselves, themselves are all Reflexive Pronouns which are acted upon by the Subject which is a Noun. Some examples of Reflexive Pronouns are given below –

- You are looking at yourself.
- I am all by myself.
- She bit herself.
- He is killing himself.
- The cat hit itself.
- We think about ourselves the most.
- They brought it upon themselves.

While reflexive pronouns stress on the object and are rendered incomplete when eliminated from the sentence, the usage of the ‘self’ version of pronouns as an addition, the removal of which will not change the structure of the sentence, is not a Reflexive pronoun. For example, in the sentence, ‘We can do it ourselves’, ‘ourselves’ is not a

Reflexive Pronoun as its removal from the sentence does not change its structure. 'We can do it' is a correct sentence even without 'ourselves'.

Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative Pronouns ask questions which have Pronouns or Nouns as an answer.

Interrogative Pronouns are Pronouns that deal with asking questions. Questions words Who, Which, What, Whose, Whom, Whoever, Whichever, Whatever, Whosever, Whomsoever are all Interrogative Pronouns.

A few examples of Interrogative Pronouns usage are as follows –

- Who came today?
- Which seagull is yours?
- What is this?
- Whose is this?
- Whom do you think you're talking to?
- Whoever do you think asked this question?
- Whatever did you do?
- Whosoever did you talk to?
- Whomsoever plucked this flower?

The most important thing you need to remember when identifying an Interrogative Pronoun is that all questions with W Question words are not Interrogative Pronouns. Interrogative Determiners and Interrogative Adverbs are often confused to be Interrogative Pronouns.

Here are a few examples to help you tell them apart –

- **Interrogative Determiners** – 'Which colour was the most beautiful?' (Here, 'Which' is an Interrogative Determiner that brings about a change in the Noun 'colour', something which Interrogative Pronouns do not do).
- **Interrogative Adverb** – 'Why do you think that colour was the most beautiful?' (The reply to this question will always be a description using an adverb. For example, 'I think that colour was the most beautiful because...').
- **Interrogative Pronoun** – 'Which colour is this?' (This sentence, an example of Interrogative Pronoun, always answers the question using a noun or pronoun. For example, 'This colour is Red'. The secret tip to identifying the Interrogative pronoun is trying to answer the question and checking if the answer is a Noun or Pronoun)

Possessive Pronouns

Mine' and 'Yours' are Possessive Pronouns.

Possessive Pronouns indicate towards the owner of the possession. Mine, Yours, its, Hers, His, Ours, Thiers are all pronouns that reveal the ownership of a thing and are, therefore, Possessive Pronouns. Possessive Pronouns do not have an apostrophe in them and putting an apostrophe changes the possessive pronoun into a Personal Pronoun.

A few examples of the usage of Personal Pronouns in sentences are given below –

- This dog is mine.
- This pen is yours.
- This is its food.
- This cap is hers.
- That file is his.
- These hangers are ours.
- These beds are theirs.

ADJECTIVES

An **adjective** is a word that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun. Adjectives can be used to describe the qualities of someone or something independently or in comparison to something else.

Examples: Adjectives in a sentence: e.g.

I like **old** houses.

The boy is **tall** and **skinny**.

Jane is **smarter** than her brother.

Adjectives modify or describe nouns and pronouns. They can be attributive (occurring before the noun) or predicative (occurring after the noun). Predicative adjectives typically follow a linking verb (such as forms of the verb “to be”) that connects the subject of the sentence to the adjective.

Examples: Attributive and predicative adjectives:

- The proud soldier is home.
- The soldier is proud.
- The dedicated employee starts early.
- The employee is dedicated.

Note While most adjectives can occur in both the attributive and predicative position, some can only be used in one position. For example, the word “main” can only be used in the attributive position, while the word “asleep” can only be used in the predicative position.

- The main reason is that ...
- * The reason is main. (incorrect)
- The man is asleep.
- * The asleep man is ... (incorrect)

Comparative and superlative adjectives

Comparative adjectives are used to compare two things. They’re usually formed by adding the suffix “-er” (or “-r” if the word ends in the letter “e”). For two-syllable words that end in “y,” the “y” is replaced with “-ier.”

Comparative adjectives can also be formed by adding “more” or “less” before an adjective that has not been modified. The “more” form is typically used for words with two or more syllables, while the “less” form is used for all adjectives.

Examples: Comparative adjectives in a sentence:

- Simon’s essay is **longer** than Claire’s.
- The room is **cozier** with the fire lit and **less cozy** without it.
- I have never met a **more honorable** person.

Superlative adjectives are used to indicate that something has the most or least of a specific quality. They’re typically preceded by the definite article “the” and usually formed by adding the suffix “-est” (or “-st” if the word ends in the letter “e”). For two-syllable words that end in “y,” the “y” is replaced with “-iest.”

Superlative adjectives can also be formed by adding “most” or “least” before an adjective that has not been modified. The “most” form is typically used for words with two or more syllables, while the “least” form is used for all adjectives.

Examples: Superlative adjectives in a sentence:

- Even the **greatest** athletes need adequate rest.
- All the courses were delicious, but the dessert was the **tastiest**.
- Alicia is the **most charming** person at the party, but her partner is the **least charming**.

Absolute adjectives

An **absolute adjective** is an adjective describing an absolute state that cannot be compared. For example, the word “dead” is often considered to be an absolute adjective because it’s not possible to be “deader” than someone else.

However, actual usage varies, and absolute adjectives are often modified by words such as “almost.”

Adjectives vs. adverbs

Adverbs can be used to modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs, whereas adjectives only modify nouns and pronouns. When used to modify a verb, an adverb describes **how** an action is being performed (e.g., Brandon runs **slowly**).

Adverbs are often formed from adjectives by adding the suffix “-ly.” However, not all words ending in “-ly” are adverbs (e.g., “ugly” is an adjective).

Adverbs can be formed from adjectives in numerous other ways, depending on the ending.

Adjectives with linking verbs

Adjectives are often confused with adverbs when they are used as complements for linking verbs (e.g., “the wife **is devoted**”). In these instances, a common mistake is to use an adverb in place of an adjective.

While adverbs describe how an action is performed, linking verbs (e.g., “be,” “seem,” “become,” “feel”) often refer to a state rather than an act and therefore take an adjective. In the example below, an adjective is needed because “feel” is a linking verb.

Examples: Adjectives and adverbs with linking verbs

- * Jesse **feels badly** when he doesn’t finish his homework. (Incorrect)
- Jesse **feels bad** when he doesn’t finish his homework.

How to order adjectives

Attributive adjectives and determiners are typically given in a specific order according to their function. This isn’t an order that English speakers learn as a set of rules, but rather one that people pick up intuitively and usually follow without thinking about it:

- Determiner (e.g., a, the, one)
- Opinion (e.g., beautiful, valuable, indecent)
- Size (e.g., big, small, tiny)
- Shape or age (e.g., round, square, hundred-year-old)
- Color (e.g., white, brown, red)
- Origin (e.g., Dutch, aquatic, lunar)
- Material (e.g., wooden, metal, glass)

Examples: Adjective word order:

- A **valuable lunar** stone.
- A **beautiful, small, Dutch** windmill.

Participial adjectives

A **participial adjective** is an adjective that is identical to the participle form of a verb (typically ending in “-ing,” “-ed,” or “-en”).

Examples: Participial adjectives in a sentence:

- The light produced a **blinding** effect.
- Eva was pretty **confused**.

Nominal adjectives

A **nominal adjective** (also called a **substantive adjective**) is an adjective that functions as a noun. Nominal adjectives are typically preceded by the definite article “the.”

Nominal adjectives in a sentence:

- The candidate appealed to both the **rich** and the **poor**.
- It's important to take care of the **elderly**.

ADVERBS

An adverb is a word that modifies (describes) a verb (“he sings loudly”), an adjective (“very tall”), another adverb (“ended too quickly”), or even a whole sentence (“Fortunately, I had brought an umbrella.”). Adverbs often end in -ly, but some (such as fast) look exactly the same as their adjective counterparts.

An adverb is a word that modifies (describes) a verb (“he sings **loudly**”), an adjective (“**very** tall”), another adverb (“ended **too** quickly”), or even a whole sentence (“**Fortunately**, I had brought an umbrella.”). Adverbs often end in -ly, but some (such as *fast*) look exactly the same as their adjective counterparts.

- *Tom Longboat did not run **badly**.*
- *Tom is **very** tall.*
- *The race finished **too** quickly.*
- ***Fortunately**, Lucy recorded Tom’s win.*

It’s easy to identify the adverbs in these sentences.

Adverbs are one of the four major word classes, along with nouns, verbs and adjectives. We use adverbs to add more information about a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a clause or a whole sentence and, less commonly, about a noun phrase.

- *Can you move it **carefully**? It’s fragile.*
- ***Quickly!** We’re late.*
- *She swims **really** well.*
- *Don’t go so **fast**.*
- *You have to turn it **clockwise**.*
- *Come over **here**.*
- ***Actually**, I don’t know her.*
- *I haven’t seen them **recently**.*
- *The bathroom’s **upstairs** on the left.*

Adverbs: meanings and functions

Adverbs have many different meanings and functions. They are especially important for indicating the time, manner, place, degree and frequency of something.

Time	<i>I never get up early at the weekends.</i>
Manner	<i>Walk across the road carefully!</i>
Place	<i>When we got there, the tickets had sold out.</i>

Degree	<i>It's rather cold, isn't it?</i>
frequency	<i>I'm always losing my keys.</i>

Adverbs often modify verbs. This means that they describe the way an action is happening.

*Huan sings **loudly** in the shower.*

*My cat waits **impatiently** for his food.*

*I will **seriously** consider your suggestion.*

The adverb in each of the sentences above answers the question *In what manner?* How does Huan sing? Loudly. How does my cat wait? Impatiently. How will I consider your suggestion? Seriously. Adverbs can answer other types of questions about how an action was performed. They can also tell you when (“we arrived **early**”), where (“turn **here**”), or with what frequency (“I go there **often**”).

Adverbs and adjectives

Adverbs can also modify adjectives. An adverb modifying an adjective generally adds a degree of intensity or some other kind of qualification to the adjective.

- *The lake is **quite** beautiful.*
- *This book is **more** interesting than the last one.*
- *“Is my singing **too** loud?” asked Huan.*
- *My cat is **incredibly** happy to be having his dinner.*
- *We will be **slightly** late to the meeting.*
- *This shirt is a **very** unflattering shade of puce.*

Adverbs and other adverbs

You can use an adverb to describe another adverb. In the following sentence, the adverb *almost* is modifying the adverb *always* (and they’re both modifying the adjective *right*):

- *The weather report is **almost always** right.*

In fact, if you wanted to, you could use several adverbs to modify another adverb.

- *Huan sings **rather enormously too** loudly.*

However, that often produces weak and clunky sentences like the one above, so be careful not to overdo it.

Adverbs and sentences

Some adverbs can modify entire sentences—unsurprisingly, these are called **sentence adverbs**. Common ones include *generally*, *fortunately*, *interestingly*, and *accordingly*. Sentence adverbs don't describe one particular thing in the sentence—instead, they describe a general feeling about all of the information in the sentence.

- ***Fortunately**, we got there in time.*
- ***Interestingly**, no one at the auction seemed interested in bidding on the antique spoon collection.*

Degrees of comparison

Like adjectives, many adverbs can show degrees of comparison, although it's slightly less common to use them this way. With certain **flat adverbs** (adverbs that look exactly the same as their adjective counterparts), the **comparative** and **superlative** forms look the same as the adjective comparative and superlative forms. It's usually better to use stronger, more precise adverbs (or stronger, more precise adjectives and verbs) than to rely on comparative and superlative adverbs.

An **absolute or positive adverb** describes something in its own right:

- *He smiled **warmly**.*
- *They asked me to deliver a **hastily** written note.*

To make the comparative form of an adverb that ends in *-ly*, add the word *more*:

*He smiled **more warmly** than the others.*

*The **more hastily** written note contained the clue.*

To make the superlative form of an adverb that ends in *-ly*, add the word *most*:

- *He smiled **most warmly** of them all.*
- *The **most hastily** written note on the desk was overlooked.*

Placement of adverbs

In general, adverbs should be placed as close as possible to the words they are intended to modify. Putting the adverb in the wrong spot can produce an awkward sentence at best and completely change the meaning at worst. Consider the difference in meaning between the following two sentences:

*I **almost** dropped all the papers I was holding.*

*I dropped **almost** all the papers I was holding.*

The first sentence is correct if it's meant to communicate that you very nearly dropped the papers but managed to hold on to them—the adverb *almost* comes right before the verb *dropped*, so it's most naturally understood as modifying *dropped*. In the second sentence, *almost* has moved to modify the adjective *all*, communicating that you did drop most of the papers.

Be especially careful about the word *only*, which can be an adverb, an adjective, or a conjunction and is one of the most often misplaced modifiers. Consider the difference between these two sentences:

- *Phillip **only** fed the cat.*
- *Phillip fed **only** the cat.*

The first sentence means that all Phillip did was feed the cat. He didn't pet the cat or pick it up or anything else. The second sentence means that Phillip fed the cat, but he didn't feed the dog, the bird, or anyone else who might have been around.

When an adverb is modifying a verb phrase, the most natural place for it is usually the middle of the phrase.

- *We are **quickly** approaching the deadline.*
- *Huan has **always** loved singing.*
- *I will **happily** assist you.*

QUANTIFIERS

Quantifiers are adjectives or adjectival phrases that describe “how much” (uncountable) or “how many” (countable)† of a given noun there is. Some quantifiers can only go with countable (precise quantity) nouns, while others can only modify uncountable (imprecise quantity) nouns.

In this section, you will find various examples to demonstrate how quantifiers can be used in sentences. Keep in mind that the choice of quantifier depends on the context, the type of noun being used, and the intended meaning of the sentence.

Example 1: Jane has *many* friends. (Countable noun: friends)

Example 2: I don't have *much* time left. (Uncountable noun: time)

When using quantifiers with countable nouns, you can often use "a few" or "few" as alternatives depending on the intended meaning:

- *A few* has a more positive connotation, suggesting that there is a small but sufficient amount. Example: I have *a few* apples left on the table.
- *Few* has a more negative connotation, suggesting that there is a limited amount. Example: I have *few* friends in this city.

Similarly, for uncountable nouns, you can use "a little" or "little":

- *A little* has a positive connotation, suggesting that there is a small but sufficient amount. Example: There's *a little* sugar left in the jar.
- *Little* has a negative connotation, suggesting that there is a limited amount. Example: I speak *little* Italian.

Quantifiers such as "all," "any," and "some" can also be used with both countable and uncountable nouns:

- She invited *all* her friends to the party. (Countable noun: friends)
- Is there *any* water left in the bottle? (Uncountable noun: water)
- I bought *some* books yesterday. (Countable noun: books)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

Conditionals describe the result of a certain condition.

e.g. If you study hard, you will pass your exams.

The if-clause tells you the condition (If you study hard) and the main clause tells you the result (you will pass your exams). The order of the clauses does not change the meaning.

Conditional sentences are statements discussing known factors or hypothetical situations and their consequences. We use them to communicate that something is true or happens only if something else is true or happens—that is, only under a certain condition. Complete conditional sentences contain a conditional clause (often referred to as the if-clause) and the consequence. If you study hard, you will pass your exams.

There are four different types of conditional sentences in English. Each expresses a different degree of probability that a situation will occur or would have occurred under certain circumstances.

1. Zero conditional sentences
2. First conditional sentences
3. Second conditional sentences
4. Third conditional sentences

- Zero conditional sentences express general truths—situations in which one thing *always* causes another. When you use a zero conditional, you're talking about a general truth rather than a specific instance of something. Consider the following examples:
 - *If you don't brush your teeth, you get cavities.*
 - *When people smoke cigarettes, their health suffers.*
- There are a couple of things to take note of in the above sentences using the zero conditional. First, when using the zero conditional, the correct tense in both clauses is the simple present tense. A common mistake is to use the simple future tense.
- *When people smoke cigarettes, their health **will** suffer.*
Second, notice that the words *if* and *when* can be used interchangeably in these zero conditional sentences.

- First conditional sentences

First conditional sentences are used to express situations in which the outcome is likely (but not guaranteed) to happen in the future. Look at the examples below:

If you rest, you will feel better.

If you set your mind to a goal, you'll eventually achieve it.

Note that we use the simple present tense in the if-clause and the simple future tense in the main clause—the clause that expresses the likely outcome. This is how we indicate that under a certain condition (as expressed in the if-clause), a specific result *will likely* happen in the future. Examine some of the common mistakes people make using the first conditional structure:

*If you **will rest**, you will feel better.*

*If you **rest**, you will feel better.*

Explanation: Use the simple present tense in the if-clause.

*If you set your mind to a goal, **you eventually achieve** it.*

*If you set your mind to a goal, **you'll eventually achieve** it.*

Explanation: Use the zero conditional (**simple present + simple present**) only when a certain result is guaranteed. If the result is likely, use the first conditional (**simple present + simple future**).

- second conditional sentences

Second conditional sentences are useful for expressing outcomes that are completely unrealistic or will *not* likely happen in the future. Consider the examples below:

If I inherited a billion dollars, I would travel to the moon.

If I owned a zoo, I might let people interact with the animals more.

Notice that the correct way to structure second conditional sentences is to use the simple past tense in the if-clause and a modal auxiliary verb (e.g., *could*, *should*, *would*, *might*) in the main clause (the one that expresses the unrealistic or unlikely outcome). The following sentences illustrate a couple of the common mistakes people make when using the second conditional:

*If I **inherit** a billion dollars, I would travel to the moon.*

*If I **inherited** a billion dollars, I would travel to the moon.*

Explanation: When applying the second conditional, use the simple past tense in the if-clause.

*If I owned a zoo, I **will let** people interact with the animals more.*

*If I owned a zoo, I **might let** people interact with the animals more.*

Explanation: Use a modal auxiliary verb in the main clause when using the second conditional to express the unlikelihood that the result will actually happen.

- Third conditional sentences

Third conditional sentences are used to explain that present circumstances would be different if something different had happened in the past. Look at the following examples:

*If you **had told** me you needed a ride, I **would have left** earlier.*

*If I **had cleaned** the house, I **could have gone** to the movies.*

These sentences express a condition that was likely enough but did not actually happen in the past. The speaker in the first sentence was capable of leaving early but did not. The speaker in the second sentence was capable of cleaning the house but did not. These are both conditions that were likely but (regrettably, in these cases) did not happen.

Note that when using the third conditional, we use the past perfect (i.e., **had** + **past participle**) in the if-clause. The **modal auxiliary** (**would, could, should, etc.**) + **have** + **past participle** in the main clause expresses the theoretical situation that *could have* happened.

Consider these common mistakes when applying the third conditional:

*If you **would have told** me you needed a ride, I **would have left** earlier.*

*If you **had told** me you needed a ride, I **would have left** earlier.*

Explanation: With third conditional sentences, do not use a modal auxiliary verb in the if-clause.

*If I had cleaned the house, I **could go** to the movies.*

*If I had cleaned the house, I **could have gone** to the movies.*

Explanation: The third conditional expresses a situation that could have happened in the past only if a certain condition had been met. That's why we use the modal auxiliary verb + *have* + the past participle.

Were to in the if-clause

The verb phrase *were to* is sometimes used in conditional sentences when the likely or unlikely result is particularly awful or unthinkable. In this case, *were to* is used to place emphasis on this potential outcome. Consider these sentences:

*If I **were to** be sick, I would miss another day of work.*

*If she **were to** be late again, she would have to have a conference with the manager.*

*If the rent **were to** have been a penny more, they would not have been able to pay it.*

Punctuating conditional sentences

Despite the complex nature of conditional sentences, punctuating them properly is really simple!

Here's how it works:

Use a comma after the if-clause when the if-clause precedes the main clause.

If I'd had time, I would have cleaned the house.

If the main clause precedes the if-clause, no punctuation is necessary.

I would have cleaned the house if I'd had time.

PASSIVE VOICE

Active sentences are about what people (or things) do, while passive sentences are about what happens to people (or things). The passive voice is formed by using a form of the auxiliary verb “be” (be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been) followed by the past participle of the main verb.

e.g. The police arrested the criminal. (Active voice)

The criminal was arrested (by the police). Passive.

In the active voice, the subject is performing an action:

- *The dog chases the ball.*

Notice how the subject, *dog*, is performing the action, *chase*, on the target of the action, *ball*. This is a simple, direct example of the active voice.

In the passive voice, the action’s target, *ball*, is positioned first as the focus of the sentence. The sentence gets flipped, and the subject is now being acted upon by the verb. In other words, the subject is *passive*:

- *The ball is being chased by the dog.*

Active and passive are the two grammatical voices in English. Neither is inherently better than the other, but each is suited to certain types of writing. There’s a reason why news anchors sound detached from the stories they’re reporting: They often speak using the passive voice. There’s also a reason why the authors of opinion pieces sound so sure of their positions: They usually write in the active voice.

Although the idea of teachers telling their students to avoid the passive voice is repeated so frequently that it feels like a trope, the truth is that the passive voice *does* have its applications. We’ll get into those later. For now, let’s look at how to recognize the active voice and the passive voice in your writing and in others’ work.

Active voice

As we’ve learned, in the active voice, the sentence’s subject performs the action. Here are two examples of sentences in the active voice:

- *Shira likes bird watching.*
- *She loves twilight.*

No matter what verb you use, structuring your sentence so the subject performs the verb is writing in the active voice.

The active voice has a direct, clear tone. Use it when you want the reader to focus on the subject of your sentence and the action it is doing rather than on the action's target.

Passive voice

In the passive voice, the action's target is the focus, and the verb acts upon the subject. Or, to put it in the passive voice, the subject is acted upon by the verb. Every sentence in the passive voice contains two verbs:

- A conjugated form of "to be"
- The main verb's past participle

Take a look at the previous examples, now written in passive voice:

- *Bird watching is liked by Shira.*
- *Twilight is loved by her.*

Notice how the targets of the action—also the direct objects of the sentences—are now the focus. The sentences now contain a conjugated form of "to be" (*is*) and the main verb's past participle (*liked* and *loved*). Often, sentences in the passive voice are longer than sentences in the active voice simply because they have to include additional words like prepositions. Take a look at this sentence in the passive voice:

- *Summer break is [conjugated form of "to be"] loved [past participle of the main verb] by [preposition] my friends.*

However, sentences written in the passive voice don't necessarily need a preposition. Take a look at the example sentences below:

- *The check was paid.*
- *He will be remembered.*
- *The Philippines is known for its marine biodiversity.*

The passive voice has a subtler tone than the active voice has. Sometimes your writing needs this tone, like when you want your reader to focus on the action being described or the action's target rather than on who or what is performing the action. This is why the passive voice is used in lab reports—it conveys scientific objectivity by minimizing the focus on the doer of the action.

WISHES: 'wish' and 'if only'

We use *wish* and *if only* to talk about things that we would like to be different in either the present or the past. *If only* is usually a bit stronger than *wish*.

Look at these examples to see how *wish* and *if only* are used.

- *That guy is so annoying! I wish he'd stop talking.*
- *I wish I lived closer to my family.*
- *If only I hadn't lost her phone number. She must think I'm so rude for not calling her.*
- *I wish they wouldn't park their car in front of my house.*

In the present

We can use *wish/if only* + a past form to talk about a present situation we would like to be different.

- *I wish you didn't live so far away.*
- *If only we knew what to do.*
- *He wishes he could afford a holiday.*

In the past

We can use *wish/if only* + a past perfect form to talk about something we would like to change about the past.

- *They wish they hadn't eaten so much chocolate. They're feeling very sick now.*
- *If only I'd studied harder when I was at school.*

Expressing annoyance

We can use *wish* + *would(n't)* to show that we are annoyed with what someone or something does or doesn't do. We often feel that they are unlikely or unwilling to change.

- *I wish you wouldn't borrow my clothes without asking.*
- *I wish it would rain. The garden really needs some water.*
- *She wishes he'd work less. They never spend any time together.*

I wish I **DIDN'T** have to go to work tomorrow.

If only I **HADN'T SAID** that to her. She's not speaking to me now.

She wishes they **MET** ten years ago!

If only he **WERE** here now. He'd know what to do.

It looks like rain. I wish I **BROUGHT** my umbrella.

I'm starving. If only there **WAS** a restaurant open now.

If only they ___HAD ASKED___ you for advice before they started the project. You're the expert!.

I wish she ___WOULDN'T LEAVE___ her shoes there. I'm always falling over them

He wishes he ___COULD TRAVEL___ back in time and visit Ancient Rome.

The traffic on the roads was terrible. I wish we ___HAD CAUGHT___ the train instead!

I'm not saying it again. I wish _YOD'D LISTEN___ when I'm talking.

If only I ___COULD___ the time off work, I'd come and visit you.

I'm so tired. I wish I ___HAD GONE___ home earlier last night.

We're having such a lovely time in Scotland. If only it ___DIDN'T RAIN___ all the time, though!

Homs University
Higher Institute of Languages

CONJUNCTIONS & CONNECTORS

There are the main types of connectives used to join sentences and words together.

1. Coordinating conjunctions - joins independent clauses and sentences.
2. Subordinating conjunctions - joins independent, complete clauses to a dependent clause.
3. Correlative conjunctions - pairs of conjunctions used in a sentence to join different groups of words in a sentence together.

Subordinating Conjunction Exercises

Complete each sentence using the subordinating conjunction from the parenthesis:

1. I visit the Grand Canyon _____ I go to Arizona. (once, whenever, wherever)
2. This is the place _____ we stayed last time we visited. (where, when, how)
3. _____ you win first place, you will receive a prize. (wherever, if, unless)
4. You won't pass the test _____ you study. (when, if, unless)
5. I could not get a seat, _____ I came early. (as, though, when)
6. We are leaving Wednesday _____ or not it rains. (if, whether, though)
7. Pay attention to your work _____ you will not make mistakes. (so that, unless, or)
8. The musicians delivered a rousing performance _____ they had rehearsed often. (though, as, once)
9. She's honest _____ everyone trusts her. (if, so, when)
10. Write this down _____ you forget. (or, when, lest)

Answers: 1 - **whenever**, 2 - **where**, 3 - **if**, 4 - **unless**, 5 - **though**, 6 - **whether**, 7- **so that**, 8 - **as**, 9 - **so**, 10 - **lest**.

Coordinating Conjunction Exercises

Complete each sentence using the correct coordinating conjunction from the parenthesis:

1. My car has a radio _____ a CD player. (but, or, and)
2. Sharon hates to listen to rap music, _____ will she tolerate heavy metal. (but, nor, or)
3. Carol wanted to drive to Colorado, _____ Bill insisted that they fly. (and, or, but)

4. I'm afraid of heights, _____ I appreciate the view from the top of this building. (and, yet, nor)
5. I have to be on time, _____ my boss will be annoyed if I'm late. (and, nor, for)
6. Do you like chocolate _____ vanilla ice cream better? (or, nor, and)
7. I have to go to work at six, _____ I'm waking up at four. (but, so, yet)
8. I was on time, _____ everyone else was late. (so, but, for)
9. Nadia doesn't like to drive, _____ she takes the bus everywhere. (but, yet, so)
10. Our trip to the museum was interesting, _____ there were several new artifacts on display. (but, for, yet)

Answers: 1 - and, 2 - nor, 3 - but, 4 - yet, 5 - for, 6 - or, 7- so, 8 - but, 9 - so, 10 – for.

Correlative Conjunction Exercises

Complete each sentence using the correct correlative conjunction pair from the parenthesis:

1. I plan to take my vacation _____ in June _____ in July. (whether / or, either / or, as / if)
2. _____ I'm feeling happy _____ sad, I try to keep a positive attitude. (either / or, whether / or, when / I'm)
3. _____ had I taken my shoes off _____ I found out we had to leave again. (no sooner / than, rather / than, whether / or)
4. _____ only is dark chocolate delicious, _____ it can be healthy. (whether / or, not / but, just as / so)
5. _____ I have salad for dinner, _____ I can have ice cream for dessert. (if / then, when / than, whether / or)
6. _____ flowers _____ trees grow _____ during warm weather. (not only / or, both / and, not / but)
7. _____ do we enjoy summer vacation, _____ we _____ enjoy winter break. (whether / or, not only / but also, either / or)
8. Calculus is _____ easy _____ difficult _____ (not / but, both / and, either / or)
9. It's _____ going to rain _____ snow tonight. (as / if, either / or, as / as)
10. Savory flavors are _____ sweet _____ sour. (often / and, neither / nor, both / and)

Answers: 1 - **either / or**, 2 - **whether / or**, 3 - **no sooner / than**, 4 - **not / but**, 5 - **if / then**, 6 - **both / and**, 7 - **not only / but also**, 8 - **not / but**, 9 - **either / or**, 10 - **neither / nor**

Conjunctive Adverb Exercises

Complete each sentence using the correct coordinating conjunctive adverb from the parenthesis:

1. Bianca wore her rain boots; _____, her feet stayed dry during the storm. (however, therefore, on the other hand)
2. I love the color red; _____, this shade seems a little too bright. (therefore, nonetheless, in fact)
3. You have to be on time; _____, you'll miss the train. (nonetheless, however, otherwise)
4. Teresa likes to read; _____, her sister Julia prefers to watch TV. (however, in contrast, again)
5. She really wanted to eat ice cream; _____, she had a salad. (however, likewise, instead)
6. We were working hard; _____, Jill and Jerry were lounging by the pool. (meanwhile, instead, therefore)
7. He is a weak leader; _____, he has plenty of supporters. (otherwise, moreover, nevertheless)
8. She has an incredible voice; _____, she will go far in her music career. (otherwise, undoubtedly, similarly)
9. Natalie wanted to make pie but didn't have apples; _____, she decided to bake a cake. (therefore, namely, in contrast)
10. We had hoped to go to Spain; _____, we ended up in France. (otherwise, instead, again)

Answers: 1 - **therefore**, 2 - **nonetheless**, 3 - **otherwise**, 4 - **in contrast**, 5 - **instead**, 6 - **meanwhile**, 7- **nevertheless**, 8 - **undoubtedly**, 9 - **therefore**, 10 - **instead**.

CAPITALISATION & PUNCTUATION

Capitalization rules and examples

The best way to learn when to capitalize is by example. Here are some correct and incorrect ways to use capitalization:

1. Capitalize the first word of a sentence
 - this sentence is not correct.
 - This sentence is capitalized correctly.
2. Capitalize proper nouns and names
 - * There are French Fries on the menu. (incorrect)
 - He drives a Ford F-150 pickup truck. (correct)
 - * We are going to University after ten minutes. (incorrect)
 - We are going to Damascus University next week. (correct)
3. Capitalize key words in titles of books, movies, etc.
 - * I'm reading Sample Stories of the Year. (incorrect)
 - They went to cinema to Gone with the Wind. (correct)

Articles, prepositions, and conjunctions shouldn't be capitalized in titles.
4. Capitalize "I" as a pronoun
 - Mary and I passed the exam.
5. Capitalize any locations and direct addresses such as places, names of countries, cities, towns, villages, streets, squares, seas, oceans, lakes, mountains, valleys, etc. London, France, Lattakia, Great Western Road, Mount Everest, Red Sea, etc.
6. Capitalize months, holidays, and days.
 - We had a party last July at our new house in Homs.

Note that names of seasons and family members are not capitalized.

Again, do not capitalize after a comma, a semicolon, a dash or hyphen.

Comma,

Commas are primarily used to aid in clarity and to join two independent clauses with a conjunction. They set off introductory phrases and set off series. They also are used to separate independent and dependent clauses. The Oxford comma is the inclusion of a comma before coordinating conjunction in a series.

- I enjoyed the singers, and I loved the dancers.
- At the beginning of the performance, two dancers appeared from behind the curtain.
- Even though the auditorium was packed, the audience remained silent.
- I had eggs, toast, and orange juice.
- Commas can also be used to note an interjection or a parenthesis in a sentence.
 - The criminal said the judge was an idiot.
 - The criminal, said the judge, was an idiot.

The criminal is speaking in the first sentence. The judge is speaking in the second.

Colon:

Colons make the statement: note what follows. Whatever information that follows the colon must, in some way, explain, prove, or describe what ever came before it. To

properly employ a colon, ensure that the clause that follows the mark is able to stand on its own (unless it is a list). Because whatever comes before the colon must be a complete sentence, your writing after the colon is not required to be.

- The Bridge keeper asked me three questions: what is your name, what is your quest, what is your favorite color.

Semicolon;

A semicolon can be used to join two related main clauses.

- James Left a mess at his desk after he left work; Sarah had to clean it up.

Another way to employ a semicolon to join two related main clauses is to include a conjunctive adverb such as:

however, moreover, nevertheless, furthermore, consequently, or thus.

- James left a mess at his desk after he left work; consequently, Sarah had to clean it up.

Period / Full Stop

A period, or “full stop,” is a punctuation mark in English that expresses the end of a sentence and sometimes abbreviations. It is one of the most used punctuation marks and the most common way to conclude a sentence.

Consider punctuation and capitalization in the following example:

Periods convey a definitive pause. In spoken English, a speaker will briefly stop talking in between sentences—the period represents that momentary break in written English. The pause indicated by a period is a significant one, more pronounced than the pause from other punctuation marks like a comma or semicolon.

----- THE END -----